A HISTORICAL ADDRESS

By
PANDIT SHIV NARAYAN FOTEDAR

in
LOK SABHA
ON MARCH 15th, 1956

"....I sound a note of warning to this great Parliament and the Government of India-it is unlucky that the Prime Minister is not here- that if they do not rise up to the occasion and take an immediate final decision, posterity will record a decree that their ancestors, their great statesmen who are sitting in this parliament of India today, and who are sitting on the Treasury Benches, committed a political suicide while of unsound mind. That is my warning. Many complications also will follow if we do not decide this point now and the result may become formidable. The whole of Asia today appears to be in the state of siege. There is a ceasefire line in Kashmir, in Korea, in Indo- China and in Israel. All these lines are under the supervision of United Nations observers. After all how long the world can afford to hang on like this in a state of insecurity and suspense. The Gordian knot must be cut somewhere and let us do it from Kashmir...."

"..Kashmiris who have taken a decision, not only once but several times. They took it in 1947. They took it once again, and they have been taking it every now and then."

- Pandit Shiv Narayan Fotedar

We Cautioned Them

And They Never Listened To Us

The Kashmir saga is replete with blunders, committed repeatedly, at the hands of great personalities, who understood the issue with their myopic wisdom, perhaps more to cater to their one sided love for misinterpreted secularism rather than for the genuine interests of the Nation India i.e. Bharat. The results are there for everybody to see, especially for the last three decades, where Kashmir, an integral part of India, is bleeding the very mother which has been nurturing it, even at the cost of other parts of the country, where perhaps more focus is required in terms of development and financial support. A right approach, at the ground level and at the international forum from the beginning would certainly have not catapulted the Kashmir issue to its present form. But unfortunately our previous governments, ignoring sane advice from seasoned persons and people ahead of their times, treaded on an uncertain path to give an edge to our adversaries.

Reflecting the sentiments of politically mature Kashmiri masses, leaders & intellectuals from J&K were frontrunners in suggesting the right approaches to be adopted in tackling the Kashmir issue at the international fora, so that Pakistan & its western supporters could be silenced in the initial stages itself. We recall the thought provocating address of one Kashmiri stalwart, Pandit Shiv Narayan Fotedar, who while participating in the budget proceedings in the Lok Sabha on 15th March 1956, advocated to counter the Pakistani propaganda by strongly defending the integration of Kashmir with India. As a Parliament member Shiv Narayan Fotedar was taking part in the budget discussions and being an emancipated Kashmiri with a clear understanding of the events, rightly praised the then finance minister for the finance budget but lost no opportunity to bring to the notice of the august house, the faulty approach adopted by the then government in tackling the Kashmir issue. Living up to his fiery political approach, Shri Fotedar sounded a note of personal warning to the Parliament and the Government, that posterity shall record a decree that their ancestors, the great statesmen sitting in the parliament, committed a political suicide while being of unsound mind. Questioning the legitimacy of the creation of Pakistan through a backdoor suspect constituent assembly, Shri Fotedar felt surprised that Govt. of India allowed questioning of the integration of Kashmir with India, which was ratified by the legitimate constituent assembly elected by the Kashmiri masses themselves. He lamented that the parliament & the government did not propose to break the conspiracy of silence.

We reproduce here the speech delivered sixty one years back by the Hon'ble Member of Parliament, representing a vast majority of Kashmiri populace, both Muslims & Hindus. Appreciate the crystal clear message and relate the warning to the present state of Kashmir issue.

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Part II- Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, 15th March, 1956

(General Budget, General Discussion)

Pages 2720 – 2728

Pandit Fotedar (Jammu and Kashmir): With your permission, I take this opportunity of congratulating the hon. Finance Minister for having given to the country a balanced and a purposeful budget...

Shri N. M. Lingam: It is not a balanced budget.

Pandit Fotedar: It may not be according to your estimation, it is according to mine - Food for one may be poison for another. This budget which in collaboration with the National Budget as envisaged in the Second Five Year Plan, in its different ways and forms, aims at the creation and development of a society which would assure freedom from privation, freedom from want, freedom from unemployment and under-employment, freedom from disease and ignorance, and above all freedom from unequal distribution of wealth. I can understand the criticism of many hon. Members on the opposite, but I feel concerned to observe that some of them have done less than justice both to themselves and the Government when they made a wholesale condemnation of the activities of the Government to develop the country. After having combated the ravages of nature and the mischief of man, the record of our achievements during the First Five Year Plan has been one over which any nation of the world, during the comparable period, would feel proud of, I know it, and everybody in this House will agree with me that perhaps India is the first example-and history cannot record a parallel- of how an under-developed country inhabited by poverty stricken teeming millions, only within a period of seven or eight years of its independence, from thraldom, from slavery, from political suffocation and from poverty, emerged on the world stage as a power to be reckoned with, because of the achievements at home and because of the approach towards international problems, abroad.

I know there are lacunas. I know that we cannot rest on our oars. We have to work hard, and work incessantly till India could come to her own and occupy its deserved place in the comity of nations. Briefly speaking I would insist on only three things here. The first is that the Finance Minister should pay his attention to the fact that taxes should not be so levied that the poor man or the underdog is taxed, as it has been done in the case of coarse cloth and the essential oils. We have to see that the colossal unemployment is eased and effective arrangements are made for the clearance of slums. There is a pathetic paucity of housing accommodation in many parts of the country to house the Government servants both civil and defence. This deserves top priority in our second Five-Year Plan. Ours is a programme of dynamic movement, we cannot run away with a comfortable assurance that we have achieved everything. We have to proceed with a certain amount of optimistic caution, to quote the words of our worthy president.

Having said this, *I would take this opportunity now to make a reference to a very important issue which is looming large in the eyes of the world today and that is the Kashmir question*. With your permission, Sir I would like to submit to the wisdom of this great parliament a certain facet of the Kashmir question, and trust that it will have the necessary and deserved attention and consideration from this August House.

I feel that a stage is reached, in the light of international developments and because of many compelling and irrepressible circumstances here, there and everywhere in the world, when this great Parliament of the Indian people and the Government of India are called upon to take a decisive, conclusive and final decision in a most unequivocal, formal and regular manner regarding Kashmir question, consistent with the decision that has been taken by the Kashmiris themselves, decision taken time and again and energetically demonstrated to the world by the Kashmiris, that Kashmir is an integral part of India, and that Kashmir's accession was finally ratified in the constituent Assembly of Kashmir by the representatives of the people. After all, who is to decide?

Everybody says that the Kashmiris have to decide the Kashmir question. Everybody says that the Kashmiris are to determine the destiny of their own future and nobody perhaps seems to mean anything definite by it, we do it, and time and again we have done it. But unfortunately there are tremors going on, and there is a sort of stupid talk going on in SEATO, in the Baghdad Pact, and in the Commonwealth Prime Minister's conference and elsewhere about the settlement of the Kashmir question, which is no longer any question with Kashmiris now. Who is to decide? *If after the arbitrary dismissal of Pakistan Constituent Assembly, some form of Assembly which was smuggled in, and which came on the surface neither from the backdoor nor from the front door, but suddenly appeared from the trap door and bewildered the whole world into acceptance, " this is the constituent Assembly of Pakistan", had the competence and the authority to take decision regarding momentous issues pertaining to Pakistan, could decide the future of Pakistan, could devise the administrative divisions of Pakistan, and could make Pakistan a republic and pass its constitution*. If Sudan, which originally decided to have a referendum under the auspices of the International Supervisory Commission, to which India was also invited to be on the personnel of that commission afterwards surrendered the Idea of Referendum and passed the Act of Independence of a result of which Sudan became a republic and an independent country. *If all this could be constituted, legal and regular, then if the Kashmiris who are sovereign to determine their own destiny, have done a similar thing, through their constituent Assembly consisting of the accredited representatives of the people, why should our decisions be allowed to be toyed by the SEATO, by the Baghdad Pact powers and others and why this mischievous noise about Kashmir?*

I sound a note of warning to this great Parliament and the Government of India- It is unlucky that the Prime Minister is not here- that if they do not rise up to the occasion and take an immediate final decision posterity will record a decree that their ancestors, their great statesmen who are sitting in this Parliament of India today and who are sitting on the Treasury Benches,

committed a political suicide while of an unsound mind. That is my warning. And many other complications also will follow if we do not decide this point now and the result may become formidable. The whole of Asia today appears to be in a state of siege. There is a cease fire line in Kashmir, in Korea, in Indo-China and in Israel. All these lines are under the supervision of United Nations observers. After all, how long the world can afford to hang on like this in a state of insecurity and suspense. The Gordian knot must be cut somewhere and let us do it from Kashmir.

After all, what is wrong? Who says that Kashmir is not your integral part? I have decided. I am the sovereign supreme factor to decide my own fate. I have come to India of my own sweet will.

Although the Kashmir question was not discussed in the SEADO in the council of Ministers there, yet the manner in which they smuggled in Kashmir in their references and in their pronouncements shows which way the wind blows and shows also *how these prominent permanent powers of the security council are insidiously becoming a party to the Kashmir question, and how because of the SEATO, the Baghdad Pact and the military alliance with Pakistan they have forfeited the complexion and character of impartiality*. In my estimation and for my purposes-I am drawn to this irresistible conclusion- that there is no difference between the SEATO and the Security Council. It is no longer a Security Council; It is an insecurity council. The reference to Kashmir, besides smacking of constitutional and legal impropriety, besides being a transgression of the aims and objects of the SEATO is an outrage against international code of political morality. It is an insult to the dignity and the authority of the United Nations who are still in some form or other seized of the Kashmir question; and it exhibits a colossal ignorance and disregarded of the sentiments and feelings of the Kashmiris who have taken a decision, not only once but several times. They took it in 1947. They took it once again, and they have been taking it every now and then. When Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khruschev visited Kashmir, they made a reference to Kashmir and said that Kashmir is an integral part of India and the Kashmiris themselves have taken a

decision. Not that they were tutored or inspired. I may tell you that the whole route from the airport up to Srinagar over a length of 12 miles, hundreds of thousands of citizens, full of cheering crowds, demonstrated energetically their accession to India and their happiness over the friendship between Russia and India. When Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khruschev said this, they said what they saw, I extend an invitation to Mr. Eisenhower, I extend an invitation to Mr. Dulles. I extend an invitation to Mr. Eden and Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to come to Kashmir and to see things for themselves. They will not only endorse what Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khruschev said but they will say something more, which after all may not be very palatable to their ally, friend and protégé, Pakistan.

Mr. Chaudhuri Huq, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, in his magnanimity and in his generosity referred in the SEATO council to the Kashmir question and said that he wanted to seek the right of self-determination for Kashmiris, May I put this question to him? *Did he want that type of self-determination for Kashmiris, which he gave them in 1947 when the Titanic hordes of mediaeval barbarism were let loose on the innocent Kashmiris, by Pakistan, when sin and perdition were carried into the innocent homes of Kashmir hill men, when huge areas of land were devastated, when thousands of persons, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were put to the sword and thousands of homes were reduced to ashes and women were molested and brutally assaulted? Was it that type of self-determination that he wanted to give to the Kashmiris?* Let Pakistan know it; let Pakistan and her imperialist masters understand that Kashmir is not a no-man's-land and that the Kashmiris are people possessed of political integrity and resolution.

Kashmiris are the people who in 1947, before Indian troops came over there, when under the storm and stress of circumstances even our great leaders had to bow down before the partition theory, stood in solitary glory challenging the venom of the Two Nation Theory. Kashmiris under the leadership of the National Conference hurled back the enemy beyond Uri. If now the decision that we have taken is by-passed or any attempt from

any quarter is made to impose a decision on Kashmiris, Kashmiris will resist it with their lives and in the same way when they resisted Pakistan aggression in 1947. Besides, that, *I may assure you sir that any disturbance now of the arrangements which the Kashmiris have done for themselves and for their future would be fraught with dangerous consequences which may imperil not only peace in India and Pakistan but may imperil peace in the whole of Asia and may endanger the peace of the entire world*. Kashmir is a sort of spot you have to think about. It is indissolubly linked up with the world politics today. It is rather disquieting to observe that no reference has been made to this most important issue, so far in the Parliament. All the papers are full of matters about SEADO. Even the British Labour Party has taken up the question in the Parliament. Certain other Parliaments are doing it. *But somehow we do not propose to break the conspiracy of silence.*

The House will be interested to know about one thing that after the Kashmir Constituent Assembly, which consists of the accredited representatives of the people of Kashmir, had taken a decision. Kashmiris, instead of uncertainty, instability and fear of the morrow, set themselves on a path of peaceful constructive progress. We have got every reason to feel very thankful to the Government of India, to the Parliament and to the Indian Peopleas a whole, for the invaluable assistance and guidance that Kashmiris have got from them. And I may assure them that Kashmir today is forging ahead with confidence and a sort of earnest desire to develop Kashmir into a welfare state is visible and discernible in different spheres of administration, in education, in health, in rural departments, in tourism and everywhere. I do not subscribe to what Shri Kamath said. Shri Kamath's approach to the Kashmir problem is anything but helpful and comes in the very way of the objective that we pursue.

One more point I would have done.........

Shri Bogawat (Ahmednagar South): Who instigated the Afridi Tribes?

Pandit Fotedar: I would like to say one thing, that somehow

some colonial powers in the world deliberately or otherwise are suffering from a painful conception that all the Muslims of the world believe in the two nation theory and that all the Muslims of the world are religious fanatics and banking on this self-amazing and deluding consciousness, they feel that in Kashmir since there is a Muslim majority and therefore, if a plebiscite is held, the Muslims would vote for Pakistan. To disillusion them of this great mental adhesion, which is creating much mischief, I would like to refer this House to a few incidents which happened in Kashmir from the year 1939 onwards, right up to date which will prove conclusively. The way of Life that a Kashmiri Muslim had chalked out for himself in Kashmir, consistent with an illustrious past and a progressive heritage based on the principles of humanism and also prove its temperamental predictions for India, of which Kashmir is and has been an integral part from times immemorial saturated with the spirit of secular democracy. I would like to refer you Sir to the year 1939. It was the Muslim of Kashmir who converted the Muslim Conference into the National Conference, after having come under the influence and the inspiring guidance of the National Congress, which stood for the emancipation of the down trodden people of India on the basis of secular democracy.

Shri Velayudhan: Who is that Musalman?

Pandit Fotedar: I said there was a Muslim Conference in Kashmir from the year 1931 to 1938. In the year 1939 when the leaders of the conference felt that Congress was the potent factor in achieving responsible government to the different states, that congress was an organization proceeding on the basis of secular democracy and progressivism and believing in the dignity of an individual, the leaders of the Muslim conference were very much influenced by that ideology and they converted the Muslim Conference into the National Conference and had the blessings of the Indian National Congress.

In the year 1942, when the "Quit India Movement" was started, the National Conference held Parades, mass demonstrations and all type of agitations in sympathy with the movement started in India. You will be surprised to know, Sir, that in the year 1944,

when the lamented Mr. Jinnah of revered memory visited the capital of Kashmir, when that great religious, pontific potentate of Muslims, who believed in the Two -Nation Theory and believed always in exhorting Muslims to come under the flag of the Muslim League, visited Kashmir, We offered him the traditional hospitality. And after that what happened? He, actuated by his own habit, once addressing a huge, mammoth public gathering, told them that the National Conference was working under the influence of the Hindu Congress, and it would not do well for the Muslims of Kashmir to be with the Congress, but they should come under the banner of the Muslim League. All of sudden there was tension, pandemonium, brickbats and all sorts of things happened. The position of Mr. Jinnah became very tight. The police had to intervene and Mr. Jinnah was with the greatest difficulty rescued against the onslaught of an angry mob, put into a car and delivered under police escort at Kohala, beyond the frontiers of Kashmir.

Then in the year 1947 (early August) when after partition power was transferred to Indians on the independence day, in spite of the communal holocaust and unprecedented communal upheaval elsewhere, Kashmiris celebrated the occasion with great jubilation and éclat, although there was no talk of the complete accession to India then and leaders of the National Conference were still behind the bars. The whole country beamed with mirth and all the important places and buildings were bedecked with tricolour flags.

Again in the year 1947, when the tribesmen, under the influence and the inspiration of Pakistan, invaded Kashmir, they had reached almost the doors of the city of Srinagar, were battering at the gates; where Muslim were inside and Muslim invaders outside; the administration collapsed from within, not a single sentinel was to be seen anywhere and the Mohra Power House was damaged; it was all wilderness and darkness -at that time, who saved Kashmir? Kashmiris under the banner and under the leadership of the National Conference stood up like one man and gave a slogan which acted like a spark in a powder magazine. The whole Nation, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs burst up like

dynamite and hurled back the invader. If the Muslims then would like to fall into the lap of Pakistan, they could, but instead they fought the Pakistanis and acceded to India. It was after that the Indian troops came to our assistance at our request and at our invitation.

Then I come to the year 1954. *Pakistan never wanted a decision on Kashmir. Pakistan always wanted to use the Kashmir case as a trump-card for diverting the attention of the Pakistan masses from colossal economic and social distress. It is in this context that the Kashmir case was used every time by Pakistan, manifesting sometimes in the slogan for "Jehad" and "raising the Fist". In the security council, we found that Pakistan, which in my estimation as in the estimation of all the nationals of Kashmir, as also accepted and declared as an aggressor by Mr. Dickson, the UNO Mediator, was very clearly smuggled in as a party to the Kashmir case. We waited for full six and a half years.* But the International powers used Kashmir as a pawn on the chess-board of international politics for their own benefit and to the detriment of India and Kashmir, against an aggressor who had referred the case to the United Nations for Justice. *They never cared for the sentiments of Kashmiris; they were completely callous to the patent facts of the case.* And when the principal permanent member of the Security Council- my reference is to America, entered into a sort of military alliance with Pakistan, there was no other alternative for us, but to exercise our right to take a decision. I can understand the bona fides of the Government of India, their respect for their commitments and all the values that they lay by their commitments and obligations. But those commitments were against a certain specific set of circumstances. Now the whole basis has altered and *I make an earnest appeal to this great house, the great Parliament representing the teeming millions of India, and to the representatives of the Government on the treasury benches, that this is the time that they should take a decisive, conclusive and final decision on Kashmir and tell the world, 'Hands off Kashmir.'*



PANDIT SHIV NARAYAN FOTEDAR

Pandit Shiv Narayan Fotedar (1904 - 1976), born at Rainawari, Srinagar completed his school and college education in Srinagar and was awarded Masters Degree in History by Punjab University Lahore in 1928. He was appointed as Professor of history at Price of Wales College (now GGM Science College) Jammu in 1929, where he worked for two and a half years. Maharaja Hari Singh appointed him Provincial Head of census operations in the State in 1931. He was elected to Srinagar Municipal Committee in 1933 and 1937 and rose to the level of Chairman. Also he was elected to the Praja Sabha (constituted by Maharaja Hari Singh) in 1934, 1938 and 1947 and remained its member continuously for 14 years. He joined National Conference in 1952 and was nominated by the Constituent Assembly of J&K State as Member of Parliament. He was elected as member and Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council in 1957 and 1959 for two consecutive terms. He served as member on some of the important parliamentary committees like, NCC committee, Foreign affairs committee during his tenure as the Member of Parliament. He was founder President of Hindu Education Society Kashmir, established in 1944. His socio-political career spanned over a period of fifty years during which he dedicated his life for the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

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